

Denture-cleaner makers fight plaque, each other

New York—Plaque has become the newest villain in denture cleaner advertising. No sooner had Colgate-Palmolive rolled out Mer-Colgate-Palmolive rolled out Mer-sene denture cleanser nationally with an anti-plaque story then Block Drug added plaque-fighting claims to its advertising for both Polident and Dentu-Creme.

Polident and Dentu-Creme.
Although Block chose to respond to Mersene, it is Richardson-Merrell's Complete denture cleaner, also recently placed into national distribution, that is exnational distribution, that is ex-pected to cause more headaches for the Jersey City, N.J.-based marketer. Block has been strug-gling to prevent the gap between it and market leader Warnerand market leader Warner-Lambert's Efferdent from widen-



TITLE SLIDES

ing.
Efferdent tablets now hold about 47% of the \$80,000,000 denture-cleaner market. Block has about 45%, divided among Polident tage.

45%, divided among Pondent tablets (24%), Polident powder (6%) and Dentu-Creme (15%).

No figures are available yet, but Complete is expected to cut heavily into the Dentu-Creme share and ily into the Denti-Creme share and to add other business by convert-ing regular toothpaste users be-cause of the brand's positioning as a cleanser and toothpaste in one. Efferdent and Polident are effervescent entries, which account for over two-thirds of the denture-cleaner market.

 R-M claims Complete obtained a R-M claims Complete obtained a 25% market share in test, but in-dustry sources say the market tests consisted of short, limited store tests that aren't especially reliable for projecting market shares.
 R-M, however, is confident enough to invest about \$6,000,000 in ad support for the brand's intro-duction. Benton & Bowles is the aggregate.

agency.
Meanwhile, C-P promises to

"power off plaque" with its new Mersene. Block is thought to have chosen its response to this claim because its Polident, along with Efferdent, are named in Mersene ads. Copy claims Mersene leaves "dentures 5½ times cleaner than Efferdent or Polident tablets."

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Describing the product as a breakthrough in cleaning dentures, ads by Norman, Craig & Kummel note," "Mersene's power crystals power off plaque, the invisible bacterial film that results in

crystals power off plaque, the invisible bacterial film that results in odor, stains and can lead to tartar."

Although Polident continues with its "so you can stay close" theme, copy by Grey Advertising states that Polident safely helps remove bacterial plaque and strip away stubborn stains.

For Dentu-Creme the entire commercial is aimed at that "powerful enemy, bacterial film called plaque that grows on your denture every day." An announcer notes that Dentu-Creme is a powerful friend with a special formula for cleaning dentures. "Plaque is a powerful enemy but new mint Dentu-Creme is more powerful

There is some difference of opir There is some difference of opinion on the seriousness of plaque on dentures. Some industry sources suggest the problem is primarily a cosmetic one since the big concern among people with plaque on their own teeth is that plaque can lead to diseased gums and eventual loss of teeth. Obviously, denture wearers wouldn't have that concern.

■ That may be one reason W-L chose to stick with its campaign that asks denture wearers to try Efferdent on some badly stained denture material. Commercials close with participants indicating that they plan to switch to Efferdent. Ted Bates & Co. is the Efferdent agency.

Ted Bates & Co. is the Electronic agency.
W.L bypassed Block in the denture-cleaner market shortly after Efferdent appeared in 1965. At the time, the entry was considered revolutionary because of its premeasured dosage, uniform freshness due to individually wrapped packages and built-in color timer that faded away when the product had completed its work. Efferdent



Mersene Denture Cleans powers off plaque to leave dentures 5½ times cleaner than Efferdent or Polident tablets





Ads for new Mersene denture cleanser claim superiority to the two leading effervescent tablets, Efferdent and Polident.

has successfully withstood competition from a number of major marketers ever since. #

FTC proposes standard-setting rule

Washington—Unusual pr pre-cautions reflected nervousness at the Federal Trade Commission as it voted to propose for the first time

it voted to propose for the first time regulations for private organizations that set product standards (AA, Dec. 11).

The proposed rule's aim of guaranteeing more rights for marketers dealing with private standard-setting groups is in line with FTC chairman Michael Pertschuk's criticism of unnecessary private restrictions on competition.

Both the commission and its

Both the commission and its Both the commission and his staff sensed the rule may have rough going at a time when deregu-lation is in vogue and sweeping new regulatory initiatives are ripe for industry attack and White House and Capitol Hill suspicion.

■ Badly split about the proposed rule only weeks ago (AA, Sept. 25), the five FTC members gave it their unanimous support last week, but only after some of the more contro-

versial items were purged.

One such provision would have required private standard-setting groups to provide money to small businesses and consumer groups that wished to participate in writing the standard.

Another would have required marketers to report any complaints about a standard to the testing lab that certified the product.
While no longer a part of the proposed rule, both matters are raised as questions for public comment.

posed rule, both matters are raised as questions for public comment. Anticipating complaints from standard-setting groups, the FTC took the unusual step of releasing a detailed "clarification" of how the

detailed "clarification" of how the rule would work.

The rule, basically, would require standard setting organizations to give interested parties adequate notice that a standard was being written or changed; would guarantee the right of everyone to participate, and would provide a means for outsiders to challenge a standard as unfair, deceptive or anticompetitive.

Standards groups additionally would have to establish an impar-tial appeal board to hear unre-solved disputes.

solved disputes.
Should FTC later find "that a standard-setting group acted arbitrarily or discriminated among equivalent products, it could seek a \$10,000 fine in federal court.

Additional requirements would be placed upon testing laborato-ries that certify that products meet standards to ensure that the labs did not discriminate among com-peting marketers and that its seal is used properly by marketers.

• The proposal also requires that marketers who claim their product meets a standard disclose any limiting factor in the standard, such as a product is fireproof only under specific conditions.

Tracy Westen, deputy director of FTC's consumer protection bureau, painted the rule as one that would "lower consumer prices, encourage technical innovation and combat inflation—all with a minimum of governmental intervention." #



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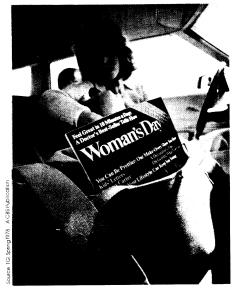
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